



LOUISE SNIDER

## Pop therapies good for laughs in 'Semi-Tough'

"Semi-Tough" (R) is fully funny. The colorful characters leap out of Dan Jenkins' raunchy novel about pro football. But the emphasis has changed considerably.

Scriptwriter Walter Bernstein and director Michael Ritchie have penetrated the pigskin paradise of male chauvinism and stolen the oink.

Cult followers of Jenkins' sports stories might be chagrined, but to the uncommitted viewer, the movie's a fair catch. Among other things, it's a tough-talking but old-fashioned triangle about two guys who discover they're in love with the same girl. Mostly, it's a hip putdown of the gurus of pop psychology.

"Semi-Tough" melds the national devotion to football with the national devotion to self-potential, self-realization, consciousness-raising programs. Movagenics, pelting and BEAT (closely resembling est) are the fictional therapies exposed to mockery.

TRADITIONAL SOURCES of solace also take some rib jabs from the satirist's elbow. During lulls in a wedding ceremony, the minister (Fred Stuthman) and the BEAT director (Bert Convy), who are jointly conducting the service, find they share a common interest in tax shelters and Caribbean banking.

Juggling romance, BEAT and football are tight-end Billy Clyde Puckett (Burt Reynolds) and receiver Shake Tiller (Kris Kristofferson), two jovial jocks on a mythical Miami football team. They share a mod apartment and a playful camaraderie with Barbara Jane Bookman (Jill Clayburgh), the team owner's daughter.

Ironically, the coarsest language is snapped out by Barbara Jane, who salts her conversation with locker-room zingers while looking like the lovable, sweet girl next door. Her two big-lug friends are likely to respond with "Aw shucks, ain't she something?"

Kristofferson and Reynolds play their roles with gusto. Reynolds again confirms his flair for comedy and his endearing ability to mock his own sexy image.

As a sober-sided convert to BEAT, Kristofferson has a less viable role, but one well suited to his deadpan style. After a marathon 48-hour encounter session, he's found "it," but his fiancée, Barbara Jane, hasn't. Straight-faced, he discusses with Billy Clyde (who's trying to work a personal draw play) whether such a "mixed marriage" can work.

THERE'S A WEALTH of fine acting in the numerous supporting roles. Robert Preston is booming and bigger than life as Big Ed, the Texas millionaire and team owner. He crawls around on all fours and pushes the merits of "movagenics" with the same enthusiasm he uses to peddle trombones in "The Music Man." Lotte Lenya is diabolical as Clara Fell, the original pounding peller.

Somewhat, most of the characters emerge quite likeable, maybe it's the charm of the country music. Gene Autry's "Back in the Saddle Again."

The gridiron scenes smack of bravado and crunching impact. However, the real clash occurs in the pre-game interview when the two team captains argue the relative benefits of BEAT versus pyramid power.

"Semi-Tough" is a raucous riot of a film, sometimes gross, but very often witty.

## Glimpses

### NEW RELEASES

**THE CHOIRBOYS (R).** Joseph Wambaugh's story of big-city policemen who relieve the pressures of their jobs in periodic drunken reveries.

**CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (PG).** Stephen Spielberg's megabuck epic about contact with extraterrestrial beings. Special effects make this another treat for sci-fi fans.

**EXQUIS (R).** Intense, realistic film of prize-winning play with Richard Burton as the self-doubting psychiatrist treating a boy (Peter Firth) who has blinded six horses.

**THE GOODBYE GIRL (PG).** Neil Simon comedy of set-up situation and laughs when an actor (Richard Dreyfuss) moves in with a twice-dumped, actor-hating hooker (Marsha Mason).

**JULIA (PG).** Jane Fonda and Vanessa Redgrave excel in Lillian Hellman's deeply moving story of the warm, courageous friendship of two women.

**LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR (R).** Judith Rossner's steamy best seller brought to the screen with stunning impact. Diane Keaton scores as a woman who teaches children by day, picks up men by night.

**MR. KLEIN (PG).** Alain Delon in subtle suspense story about a man mistaken for a Jew in France, 1942.

**PETE'S DRAGON (G).** Combination of animation and live action in Disney adventure about desperate boy helped by friendly dragon.

**SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (R).** John Travolta (of Kottler's sweat hogs) is the main man in film with plenty of disco action.

**STAR WARS (PG).** Heroic sci-fi adventure about a rebellion of solar systems in a distant galaxy. Good-time movie with laughs and special effects. Two robots star the show.

**TELEFON (PG).** Charles Bronson plays a Soviet agent in this thriller about good and bad Soviet spies.

**THE TURNING POINT (PG).** Outstanding acting by Anne Bancroft and Shirley MacLaine; outstanding dancing by Mikhail Baryshnikov and Leslie Browne in film about character, choices and ballet.

**WHICH WAY IS UP? (R).** Odd reworking of Linda Wertmuller's "The Seduction of Mimi" with Richard Pryor in three roles.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General Audiences admitted.
- PG Parental Guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.

### Spackman stars

Tom Spackman portrays Morgan Evans, the young Welsh coal miner, in the current production of "The Corn Is Green" at Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester. Michel Cullen, who plays Old Tom, was inadvertently named as the actor who portrays Evans, in the review by Ethel Simmons which appeared in the Jan. 5 issue.



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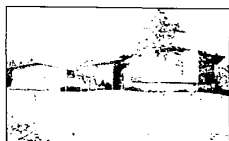
**RAMBLING** Ranch home situated on prime corner lot. Artistically decorated throughout, newer kitchen, huge family room with fireplace plus hobby room, 3 bedrooms and private patio. 557-6700. \$37,900.



**PRIVATE WOODED RETREAT** in prestige Wabek North. 1977 Spanish Contemporary offers view of lake from exposed lower level and 75' full width deck. Four doorways open to huge living and dining rooms sharing massive fireplace wall of California Driftstone to top of cathedral-beamed ceilings. 5 bedrooms plus 20' x 14' library, 50 fireplace family room, finest kitchen, gym room, etc. Obviously custom. Immediate possession. 646-6000. \$314,900.



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**MUCH TO LIKE** about this four bedroom Troy Colonial; a 20' x 12' farm kitchen with built-in, 14' x 12' formal dining room, superb fireplace family room plus laundry, Central Air. 557-6700. \$61,500



**BRAND NEW** home needs your finishing touches. 4 bedrooms, 2½ baths, ceramic foyer with curcular stairway, wet bar in fireplace family room, first floor laundry. Good floor plan. On near acre. 626-9100.



**TOWERING OAKS** on loveliest setting in this Bloomfield Hills neighborhood. Very sharp 4 bedroom home with fireplace wall in family and living rooms, first floor laundry, large redwood deck in the trees. 646-6000. \$89,900.



**IMPRESSIVE** Ranch on lovely, large curved corner lot in Beverly Hills. Enjoy carpeted kitchen with built-ins, formal dining room, fireplace, Central Air, Electronic cleaner, Birmingham schools. 626-9100. \$62,500



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